

Claims

1. A getter for use in a sealed enclosure comprising a readily oxidisable metal or metal compound supported on a solid support.
2. A getter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the metal is selected from nickel, cobalt and copper or mixtures thereof.
3. A getter as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said metal is in elemental form and is formed by reduction of a metal compound supported on said support.
4. A getter as claimed in any preceding claim in the form of a shaped pellet or tablet.
5. A getter as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the support is selected from alumina, silica, silica-alumina, titania, zirconia, carbon, or a zeolite.
6. A method of forming a shaped solid particle suitable for use as a getter for oxygen, said getter comprising a readily oxidisable metal or metal compound supported on a solid support, comprising the steps of:
 - (i) forming a shaped particle of solid support material,
 - (ii) depositing a compound of said metal on said shaped particle of support material, by impregnation or precipitation techniques,
 - (iii) optionally calcining said shaped support and metal compound,
 - (iv) reducing at least a portion of said metal compound to elemental metal by heating said shaped support and metal compound in a gaseous stream containing hydrogen.
7. A method of forming a shaped solid particle suitable for use as a getter for oxygen, said getter comprising a readily oxidisable metal or metal compound supported on a solid support, comprising the steps of:
 - a) depositing a compound of said metal on the support material,
 - (i) by impregnation or precipitation, or
 - (ii) by forming an intimate mixture of support material and metal compound by co-precipitating the metal compound with the support material; then
 - (b) optionally calcining said shaped support and metal compound,

- (c) shaping the supported metal compound into a shaped solid particle by tableting, pelleting or extrusion techniques, and
 - (d) reducing at least a portion of said metal compound to elemental metal by heating said shaped support and metal compound in a gaseous stream containing hydrogen.
8. An electrical, electronic or optoelectronic apparatus including a sealed enclosure containing a getter as claimed in any of claims 1 – 5.
9. The use of a shaped solid particle comprising copper, cobalt or nickel in elemental form supported on a solid support material selected from alumina, silica, silica-alumina, titania, zirconia carbon or a zeolite as a getter for oxygen in an electrical, electronic or optoelectronic apparatus.